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Diana T Fritz 05/24/2007 04:26:17 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

Cable
Text:

UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

April 23, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1960 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: EFIS, EINV, EIND, ETRD, ECON
Captions: None
Subject: FISH STOCKS HEAVILY DEPLETED OFF THE UAE COAST
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01960

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: ECON
INFO: DCM P/M AMB POL
Laser1:
INFO: FCS

DISSEMINATION: ECON
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM: RAALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: ECON: GARANA
CLEARED: ECON: TEWILLIAMS

VZCZCADI815
RR RUEHC RUEHZM RUEHTU
DE RUEHAD #1960 1131304
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 231304Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9570
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 0504

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 001960

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA, OES
AMEMBASSY TUNIS HOLD FOR FSI: OLIVER JOHN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EFIS](#) [EINV](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: FISH STOCKS HEAVILY DEPLETED OFF THE UAE
COAST

11. (SBU) Summary: A yearlong study of the UAE's fish and marine resources conducted by Bruce Shallard and Associates of New Zealand for the Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA), found commercial and non-commercial fish stocks significantly depleted since the last survey was conducted 25 years ago. UAE fish stocks are part of a larger stock inhabiting the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman and any resource management of these stocks will require meaningful cooperation and coordination

at both the national and regional level, something which currently is not in evidence. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Director of Environmental Education and Awareness Division of ERWDA, Dr. Ahmed Bashir, gave Econoff a copy of the fish resource assessment survey recently conducted by Bruce Shallard and Associates. The study was conducted from February 2002 to January 2003 to assess fish and marine resources in the UAE's Exclusive Economic Zone.

¶3. (SBU) The project was the first broad, systematic study of the marine resources of the UAE and the first survey of UAE fish stocks since 1978. The report recorded current densities for commercial and non-commercial fish at only 19% of 1978 estimates in the Persian Gulf and only 7% in the east coast -- catastrophic declines. Given that both commercial and non-commercial stocks have declined significantly in the last 25 years, the decreases cannot be explained by overfishing alone and are more likely due to environmental changes and habitat degradation. Coastline modifications in the UAE including activities such as dredging, land reclamation and channeling of the seabed have paralleled major declines of fish stocks.

¶4. (SBU) The study observes that all major commercial species are being exploited at their maximum potentials. Sustainable yields per year of the key species were estimated to be 13,000 tons for the Persian Gulf and 2000 tons for the east coast, but no accurate data is currently available on actual harvesting. Since fish are migratory creatures, UAE stocks are part of a larger pool inhabiting the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Thus any meaningful resource management of fish stocks cannot occur in isolation by each emirate but requires extensive cooperation and coordination at both the national and regional level.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Though UAE Law #24 regulates fishing, implementation is sporadic at best. Recent efforts by the authorities to regulate the industry include the requirement of special netting that permits young fish to escape and seasonal prohibitions during fish reproduction periods. Yet, as the study notes, over fishing still remains a significant problem. More importantly, however, neither the UAE nor any of the gulf countries is likely to deal with the larger environmental issues that result in depletion of fish stocks in the near future. Essentially there is a lack of awareness of the issue -- example one being that this project was the first comprehensive marine study ever done by the UAE and the first survey of fish stocks in 25 years. It also must be noted that destruction of the ecosystem clearly has played a major role in stock depletion not just in the UAE, but across the region. The UAE in particular pays lip-service to being strongly eco-friendly, but follow through, particularly when projects -- and profits -- are on the line, is spotty at best. End comment.

Wahba